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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9553
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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0732
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0540
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 0241
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0409
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2548
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1927
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000549

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ POLITICAL ROUNDUP: PRESSURE ON BASE
MOUNTING; AKAYEVA UNDER HOUSE ARREST

REF: A. 06 BISHKEK 1722

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 528

[1](#)C. BISHKEK 518

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Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Kyrgyz political developments this week focused on Manas Airbase, as well as parliamentary candidate Bermet Akayeva and opposition leader Felix Kulov. On the base, PM Atambayev said "steps would be taken" to review the Manas Airbase agreement in response to calls for further government action regarding the December shooting death of Alexander Ivanov. Also, the chairman of the parliamentary committee reviewing the base agreement said a decision on the base would be made by May 25. He also told reporters that he had "no doubts" that the U.S. would use the Airbase to launch an attack against Iran, if military actions were initiated. An investigation into a May 7 accident that resulted in the death of a Kyrgyz pedestrian has focused on an Amcit contractor who works at the Base.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Summary continued: Meanwhile, former President Askar Akayev's daughter and parliamentary by-election candidate Bermet Akayeva was placed under house arrest May 5 after being hastily indicted by the Prosecutor General for inciting "mass disorder" during the April 29 parliamentary by-elections. Residents of the Kemin parliamentary district claim that law enforcement officials have intimidated and arrested several pro-Akayeva supporters, and that tensions in Kemin are intensifying. Separately, Felix Kulov convened a meeting of opposition supporters on May 5, and vowed to reunite the opposition to initiate new demonstrations if neither the president nor government resigns, and the if parliament is not dissolved by May 20. Later, opposition members discussed an October timeframe for renewed protests. End summary.

AIRBASE BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT

13. (SBU) PM Almaz Atambayev said publicly that steps would be taken to "review" the Manas Airbase agreement following calls from the President's Human Rights Commission for further government action regarding the shooting death of Alexander Ivanov. The calls followed recent public disclosure that the U.S. airman involved in the shooting had returned to the U.S. in March. The Chairman of that Commission, Tursunbek Akun, said that the government and parliament should reconsider the terms of the agreement -- specifically the legal status of base personnel -- to address the still unresolved issues surrounding the death of Ivanov (reftel A). Akun added that if Ivanov's family were not properly compensated by the United States, the Kyrgyz Government would need to cover the family's loss.

14. (SBU) On May 11, MP Rashid Tagayev, Chairman of the parliamentary defense, security, law and order, and information policy committee, told the press that a decision about the base's future would be made by May 25. Parliamentary discussion of operations have been ongoing since Airman Hatfield's reported departed the country. Tagayev also told reporters that he had "no doubts" that the U.S. would use the Airbase to launch an attack against Iran, if military actions were initiated. He added that Kyrgyzstan could be caught in the crossfire, since Tehran would be more capable of responding to a U.S. attack than Iraq.

15. (C) U.S. Manas Airbase civilian contractor Jason Friend and his Kyrgyz wife, Olga Kolko, have retained counsel as MVD officials continue their investigation of the May 7 automobile accident that resulted in the death of a Kyrgyz

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pedestrian (reftel B). Investigators have been analyzing the couple's car, but there does not appear to be much focus on finding other vehicles reportedly involved in the hit and run incident. Attempts by local embassy employees to inquire about witness statements from the scene of the accident went unanswered by the lead Kyrgyz investigator. One eyewitness now reportedly claims that he saw the American at the wheel. Media accounts state that Kolko's car hit the pedestrian based on damage to the vehicle as well as the nature of the injuries. Embassy observation of the vehicle only revealed minor damage to a headlight. Media also continues to refer to the Amcit as a "U.S. Serviceman;" a discrepancy that may be due either to poor translation of the term "contractor" or biased reporting.

AKAYEVA SILENCED

16. (SBU) Following the Supreme Court's ruling barring Bermet Akayeva from running in the April 29 parliamentary by-election, and an overnight interrogation by Ministry of Interior (MVD) officials, Akayeva was indicted by the Prosecutor General for inciting "mass disorder" and placed under house arrest. Her lawyer told the press that Akayeva was charged with obstruction of justice; contempt of court; and deliberate destruction of documents -- the latter handed down for allegedly tearing up the Kemin district court's negative ruling regarding her candidacy (reftel C). While under house arrest, Akayeva has reportedly been forbidden to communicate with the outside world by telephone or e-mail. Her lawyer has lodged a formal complaint with the Prosecutor General and court. Kemin residents claim that, as a result of the government's actions against pro-Akayeva supporters, tensions in Kemin have intensified. Some have also compared the current situation in Kemin to the Aksy event of 2002 -- an event in which six protesters were killed by security forces and that continues to symbolize government oppression of the people.

17. (C) On May 5, ex-PM Felix Kulov convened a "people's meeting," or "Kurultay" in his home village of Baitik near Bishkek and published a list of demands, including the resignation of the president, government, and dissolution of parliament; an investigation into the death of an opposition member who died in a Naryn detention center during the April 11-19 demonstration; and an end to government persecutions against opposition supporters. (Note: Following a meeting with human rights activists on May 10, Prosecutor General Elmurza Satibaldiyev stated publicly that the charges of "mass disorder" against the April demonstration organizers could be "changed," (or reduced) upon completion of their investigation. End note.) Kulov also vowed to gather 300,000 signatures calling for the immediate resignation of President Bakiyev and the dissolution of Parliament. Opposition MP Tairbek Sarpashev told Ambassador May 10 that, at least, the For Reforms group will not initiate new demonstrations anytime soon -- as long as President Bakiyev and PM Atambayev begin to implement constitutional and economic reforms. Some opposition members and many political observers have discussed restarting protests in October.

COMMENT

18. (C) It may be too early to tell what may come of Bermet Akayeva's arrest, the PM's public "promise" to review the terms of the base agreement, and the May 7 accident involving the base contractor. However, Bermet Akayeva's detention as

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well as these base-related issues may provide more fodder for the opposition to use in its criticism of President Bakiyev and PM Atambayev. The base will continue to attract attention as the August Bishkek SCO summit approaches.

YOVANOVITCH